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THE ROLE OF THE ECLAC SECRETARIAT IN FOLLOWING UP THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

The purpose of this note is to establish some guidelines to help ECLAC incorporate into its work programme the topics dealt with in the decisions taken by the member States at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). All of the areas proposed for action have been considered in Agenda 21 and coincide with the regional priorities noted in the document Sustainable Development: Changing Production Patterns, Social Equity and the Environment. These topics are: i) international trade and sustainable development; ii) technology: development, access and transfer; iii) information systems for decision-making; iv) environmental management capacity and critical elements of sustainability; v) biodiversity; vi) the economic value of water: a natural resource vital to development and social equity; and vii) transboundary movements of hazardous wastes.

1. The ECLAC position in the context of UNCED

ECLAC is in a position to propose to its member States effective technical and political instruments for meeting the region-wide challenges of sustainable development by adapting universal precepts to each country's circumstances. Moreover, it has formulated a frame of reference which attempts to reconcile environmentally sustainable processes of changing production patterns with social equity.[1]

Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development represent the main outputs of UNCED. These commitments, which reflect the views expressed in the various regional reports prepared during the preparatory phase of the Conference,[2] will guide the future initiatives and activities of all the bodies of the United Nations system. In this context, eradicating poverty by changing

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[1] See ECLAC, "Report of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission", Biennial Report (12 May 1990-15 April 1992) (E/1992/35; LC/G.1736-P), Santiago, Chile, Economic and Social Council, Official Records, Supplement No. 15, 1992; ECLAC, Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity: The Prime Task of Latin American and Caribbean Development in the 1990s (LC/G.1601-P), Santiago, Chile, March 1990, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.II.G.6; Tlatelolco Platform on Environment and Development (LC/G.1712), Santiago, Chile, January 1992, adopted by the ministers and representatives of the Latin American and Caribbean countries members of ECLAC at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

[2] UNEP, Final Report of the Seventh Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP/LAC-IG.VII/4), October 1990; Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Development and Environment, Our Own Agenda, Washington, D.C., Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1990; and ECLAC, Sustainable Development: Changing Production Patterns, Social Equity and the Environment (LC/G.1648/Rev.2-P), Santiago, Chile, May 1991, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.II.G.5.

production patterns becomes the linchpin of the strategies for achieving environmentally sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

To help countries change production patterns and take remedial action in the areas of social equity and environmental sustainability, ECLAC must reflect further on the relationships among economic, environmental and social policies. First, it must empirically verify the following three hypotheses:

i) That environmental degradation is more directly harmful to low-income social groups;

ii) That inadequate environmental policies have high economic and social costs which adversely affect the pace and quality of development;[3]

iii) That sustainable development must be based on a dynamic equilibrium in the use of all the forms of capital that comprise the development effort: human, natural, physical and financial capital, all in relation to institutional and cultural resources.[4]

Over time, in the course of a long-term work programme, attempts will be made to draw up a set of proposals on integrated economic, social and environmental policies aimed at enhancing competitive capacity in the countries of the region and reducing levels of environmental degradation, while simultaneously generating growing redistributive effects. In this context, ECLAC should try to consolidate its role as a political forum and as technical secretariat for the countries of the region.[5]

2. Changing production patterns, competitiveness and sustainable development

The results of the Rio Conference —depending on how they are interpreted— can markedly influence the potential of the Latin American and Caribbean countries to gain access to development in the short and medium term. One of the many probable consequences of UNCED is a progressive build-up of environmental regulations and protectionism in the developed countries. ECLAC could therefore elaborate a set of intersectoral action proposals designed to address the problems posed by that situation in political, economic and environmental terms.

Given the characteristics of the topic, the Commission cannot and should not treat it as merely a sectoral bureaucratic obligation; instead, all the divisions and programmes of ECLAC must take care to incorporate economic-environmental considerations into their work regarding the region's future development.

The Executive Secretary will be in charge of coordinating this process, with the support of all the divisions' programmes and projects. The Programme Planning and Operations Division will be responsible for intersectoral coordination.

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[3] For example, the number of deaths and absences from work has increased among the urban populations living in the periphery of metropolitan regions and capital cities, owing to the uncontrolled water, air and soil pollution caused by overdevelopment of such areas.

[4] ECLAC, Sustainable Development..., op. cit., p. 132.

[5] Ibid.

Some of the problems that could gradually emerge and influence the region's development process in the short and medium term are:

i) The progressive expansion of a "green" market where the ecological dimension is a priority and environmental "conservationism" can become a precondition for competitiveness;

ii) An increase in the number and the political clout of regional and extraregional non-governmental organizations which, teamed with domestic or foreign business sectors, could perpetrate spurious forms of "green protectionism";

iii) The disorganized proliferation of environmental laws and institutions in the countries of the region and throughout the world, which could lead to conflicts of interest with national and international institutions and legislation.

3. ECLAC activities and a preliminary outline of priorities

Below is a summary of a set of proposed activities for the ECLAC secretariat. In view of their intersectoral nature, they should be undertaken jointly in the Commission's various spheres of action. This list, which also reflects an order of priority, is based on the Tlatelolco Platform on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration.

a) International trade and sustainable development

ECLAC should analyse the link between international trade and the environment, within the frame of reference of its strategy for the 1990s. In this context, international trade plays a vital role in determining models of economic activity and the use of resources in the light of environmental sustainability as a factor of competitiveness. Environmental protection will become an increasingly significant element of trade practices in the current decade, and hence a requirement if the region is to strengthen its position in the international market in the coming years.[6] The region must prepare itself to face these new barriers by constantly updating its technology and applying principles of "total eco-quality" in the generation, promotion and marketing of products in its export sectors, since this factor will become decisive for real competitiveness.

The developed countries have already established many protectionist barriers based on environmental considerations, and in the years to come they are very likely to demand that Latin America and the Caribbean uncritically assimilate the environmental management models prevailing in those countries, in exchange for greater access to their markets. Even in investment projects or bilateral negotiations, environmental policy will become an increasingly important element of conditionality.

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[6] These new requirements will take the form of trade barriers based on government policies that take environmental criteria into consideration, or on consumer pressure —especially in the developed countries— linked to new concepts of quality. It should be noted that the negotiation strategies used thus far to overcome barriers of this type will be much less likely to succeed in the near future.

In this context, environmental sustainability becomes crucial for enhancing the competitiveness of Latin America and the Caribbean, meaning that the imperative of adapting the region's production system to this new reality cannot be postponed.[7] At the same time, the countries of the region must make environmental protection feasible —through economic and sectoral planning and technological development— as a positive factor that must be included in their development and export strategies.

The danger that trade liberalization could aggravate environmental degradation in countries that depend heavily on the exploitation and export of natural resources is of widespread concern. ECLAC should study the importance of the role of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in this area to help the countries of the region to define their negotiating positions. This is particularly relevant in light of the fact that the link between trade and environmental policy will become a key aspect of the work of GATT, especially following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

In the area of research and empirical studies, the following activities are essential for the development of this strategy:

i) Determining the economic feasibility of significantly by raising the value added during the processing of raw materials exported by the region, and the time periods required to do so;

ii) Providing the region's Governments with arguments they can use to establish at the global level —in bilateral or multilateral forums— the principle that environmental issues should not serve as unjustified barriers (of still-dubious scientific validity) to international trade;[8]

iii) Supporting, together with other international organizations, the establishment of regional and subregional research programmes aimed at progressively reducing the region's technological dependence in the area of efficient, competitive and environmentally rational production processes;

iv) Promoting the conduct of studies and research on trends and forecasts for environment-based preferences in the target markets of all sectors, with a view to determining specifically how those trends could affect competitiveness.[9]

Even in this context —international trade and sustainable development— the subject of energy efficiency must be considered, in terms of both technology and management, as a vital factor in improving the competitiveness of the region's production sectors.[10] Although the topic is not specifically

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[7] According to ECLAC, Sustainable Development..., op. cit., p. 140, this process requires "an ongoing monitoring of the negotiations and progress made in the field of international trade and the environment. This follow-up should be supplemented by region-wide national and sectoral studies which permit the identification in detail of potential changes in the current comparative advantages...".

[8] ECLAC, Tlatelolco Platform..., op. cit.

[9] These preferences could relate inter alia to products whose use or production are non-polluting, international priorities concerning the elimination of inputs incompatible with the environment, etc.

[10] According to the World Bank, the demand for electric power in the developing countries is expanding at 8% a year, which represents roughly 50,000 megawatts of added capacity required annually. Owing to its hydroelectric potential, Latin America and the Caribbean could have a reasonable advantage over other regions of the world, whose energy development depends on highly contaminating fossil fuels that emit nitrogen and sulphur oxides and particles. However, serious efforts must be made to enhance

within the province of ECLAC, its economic and environmental implications call for study and research on the links between the energy sector and the macroeconomic policies of the countries of the region.[11]

In view of the importance attached to this topic in Agenda 21 and its relation to development and the environment, ECLAC should, in collaboration with the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE), promote the convening of periodic regional and subregional meetings to determine the economic effects and environmental costs of the energy sector in different political and geographical scenarios.

b) Technology: development, access and transfer

The importance of international competitiveness based on the absorption of technological progress will continue to grow in the future. Thus, the process of changing production patterns with social equity and environmental sustainability will require the countries of the region not only to keep up to date technologically in each sector, but also to absorb environmentally clean technologies constantly and systematically into national production processes.[12]

The basic conditions for implementing this process are, first, that the countries of the region must have access to existing technologies and, second, that incentives must be created to promote a substantial increase in the region's capacity to develop indigenous technologies. In this regard, ECLAC, with the support of other bodies of the United Nations system and of donor countries, should stimulate debate on the urgent need to train specialized human resources, from the levels of basic and intermediate education to technical and higher education.

Given the size of the technological universe, it would be desirable to promote in the short term, with the support of the UNDP "Capacity 21" programme[13] the convening of a regional meeting of high-level experts to draw up a short list of spheres of action on which regional efforts should focus. Likewise, to the extent of its available financial and human resources, ECLAC should:

i) Analyse the characteristics and nature of trends in international competitiveness and technological progress, as well as their effects on Latin American and Caribbean industrial development;

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the efficiency of electrical systems, especially with regard to transmission —during which, in some cases, energy losses amount to over 30%— and the development of new technologies compatible with each country's natural resources. Similar improvements are required in the control of polluting emissions from oil refineries and from production processes in general (World Bank, World Development Report, 1992. Development and the Environment, Washington, D.C., Oxford University Press, 1992).

[11] In collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe, ECLAC and the other regional commissions are participating in the project "Global Energy Efficiency 21".

[12] In the development and application of new, environmentally sound technologies, the management cycle for manufactured goods should be viewed holistically, from the production phase to the elimination phase ("cradle-to-grave management").

[13] The objectives of the "Capacity 21" programme are, inter alia, to formulate sustainable development strategies and programmes and projects to meet capacity-building requirements, strengthen scientific and technological research and development, enhance knowledge, information and databases and increase the participation of all actors in the decision-making process.

ii) Promote study and research on how regional economies become integrated into the world market, and how the trading potential of their natural resources and traditional exports are affected by the development of new technological alternatives;

iii) Foster research on the economic advantages of using clean technologies that minimize or substantially reduce the volume of waste resulting from production processes in general, and industrial processes in particular.

c) Information systems for decision-making

According to the proposals contained in chapter 8 of Agenda 21, it will be necessary, in the short and medium term, to carry out extensive and systematic studies to promote the integration of environmental sustainability criteria into economic management. In this regard, it will be necessary to establish a precise system of evaluation that interprets the crucial role of the environment as a source of natural capital and a factor of production. As the concept of sustainable development encompasses social, economic and environmental dimensions, it is also important that national accounting procedures are not restricted to measuring the production of goods and services that are conventionally remunerated.

To attain that objective, a common framework must be developed whereby the contributions made by all sectors of society, that are not included in the conventional national accounts, are included, to the extent consistent with sound theory and practicability, in a system of satellite accounts. It is important to seek alternatives for formulating and implementing concepts and methodologies through which environmental and socio-environmental costs can be incorporated into accounting systems and price-setting. Simultaneously and in coordination with the foregoing,[14] support should be provided at the country level for the establishment[15], inter alia, of data banks of environmental statistics and indicators to facilitate the configuration of an accounting system that reflects, with growing precision, the economic and social effects of environmental variables.

Based on the efforts already undertaken in this field by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), ECLAC is preparing to approach this problem through the "pressure-stress-response" formula, evaluating the state of the environment by disaggregating its natural elements (water, air, soil and living resources), which are influenced by pressures deriving from human activity and by the responses of economic and environmental agents.[16] The results of other initiatives in this field, such as the studies conducted by the United Nations Statistical Office (UNSTAT),[17] Canada[18] and the United

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[14] See General Assembly resolution 47/191 and Agenda 21, paragraph 40.13.

[15] See Agenda 21, chapter 40, Information for decision-making.

[16] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Report on the State of the Environment, 1991, Paris, 1991.

[17] United Nations, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/078), Statistical Papers, Series M, No.78, New York, 1984. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.84.XVII.12.

[18] See Environment Canada, A State of the Environment Report. A Report on Canada's Progress Towards a National Set of Environmental Indicators, SOE Report, No. 91-1, Ottawa, January 1991.

Kingdom,[19] should also be considered in order to meet the basic objective of this task and produce background material that promotes the inclusion of new elements in the design of strategies for economic development in the countries of the region.

Information systems should be linked to the various areas of public administration and the private sector so that the evolution of environmental management and its relationship to economic management can be systematically evaluated. These evaluations should include, inter alia, analyses in the areas of organization and administration, legal systems, basic management tools and the training of a human resources base in this field.

Moreover, the sphere of action of the ECLAC statistical sector must be enlarged so that it will be in a position to support the development of interactive databases and economic planning models that can incorporate all multisectoral information and optimize the decision-making process.

ECLAC, in close cooperation with UNSTAT, UNEP and the countries of the region, should also promote the design of such improved national accounting systems and should test them in order to perfect these preliminary concepts and methods. Lastly, it should make them consistent with those proposed in the national accounts handbook prepared by the United Nations.[20]

d) Environmental management capacity and critical elements of sustainability

To meet the environmental challenges of the 1990s, the countries of the region must address the urgent need to improve current mechanisms for managing international trade and technological development. There are three main areas whose organizational and administrative aspects require action to make those mechanisms compatible with the principles of environmental management: i) human resources training in various types of management; ii) analysis of existing institutional and legal support systems; and iii) development of new instruments for managing international trade and technological development. Below are some brief comments on each of these areas:

i) With respect to regional human resources training for environmental management at all levels of government and in the private sector, ECLAC will periodically provide the Commission on Sustainable Development and the "Capacity 21" programme of UNDP with regional reports indicating the priorities that should be considered in the UNDP programme on capacity-building. These reports will focus on the demand for specialized human resources in the most basic aspects of environmental management that relate to the trends observed in international trade and to regional and international technology policies. Special attention should be given to ensuring ready access, on the part of all the countries of the region, to legal, technical and scientific information systems based in various bodies of the United Nations system.

ii) The region's policies on sustainable development should also provide a legal and institutional framework for addressing the situations that may arise from changes in production systems and from new

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[19] D.W. Pearce and others, The Development of Environmental Indicators. Final Report to the UK Department of the Environment, London, University College, April 1991.

[20] United Nations, System of National Accounts Handbook, Studies in Methods, Series F, No. 2, Rev. 4, New York, 1992.

requirements imposed on international trade. In view of the need to correct deficiencies and update many national and international legal instruments in the environmental field, it is important to advocate their revision, at the global and regional levels, to reflect new concepts of environmental sustainability. In this connection, ECLAC, in coordination with UNEP, should promote the convening of meetings of experts and multilateral seminars to foster dialogue and technical cooperation among member States, in order to improve the region's legislative and institutional capacity in the field of sustainable development.

iii) In Latin America and the Caribbean, significant shortfalls are also apparent in the area of management instruments used by the State, including both direct (public spending and investment and their methods of financing and regulation of agents) and indirect (supported by fiscal incentives or disincentives) instruments. Since the region's experience in this area is very limited, activities are needed to provide the countries with technical support in the framework of the institutional strengthening programme mentioned earlier. ECLAC, with the support of UNEP and UNDP, should carry out technical assistance activities simultaneously and in coordination with those of the UNDP "Capacity 21" programme, in order to promote more effective use of environmental management instruments at the national, regional, municipal and sectoral levels. It should also promote improvement of the legal and administrative instruments of environmental management systems and encourage the introduction and better use of updated management methods and techniques. Within this sphere of action, horizontal cooperation ties can be established with the other regional economic commissions.

e) Biodiversity

As a result of the growing impact of human activities on the natural environment, biodiversity has already declined considerably, a fact which poses a serious threat to human development. The specific priority actions of ECLAC in the areas of conserving and managing biodiversity in the region should be based on chapters 15 and 16 of Agenda 21, and undertaken jointly with UNEP, UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations University (UNU). Since biomes that are rich in biological diversity have potentially high value added in the international market, action must be taken to ensure that countries possessing such biomes will reap these economic benefits. Mechanisms through which part of these profits can be earmarked for preserving and promoting biodiversity itself should also be sought.

To establish a basis for estimating the economic value of biodiversity and designing a regional strategy for the rational use of this capital, the following activities are proposed, in accordance with the guidelines laid down in Agenda 21:

i) Stimulating intraregional and international cooperation in order to expand scientific and economic data on biodiversity and its role in the different ecosystems in which it occurs;

ii) Promoting the conduct of studies and supporting the formulation of projects aimed at accelerating the systematic training of human resources and strengthening research centres, laboratories and all the infrastructure needed to ensure that this factor plays a growing part in the region's economic development process;

iii) Linking activities for setting up national and regional information systems (see section c)) to technical measures for preparing inventories of environmental wealth, in order to improve them further;

iv) Promoting research and studies on international trade and biodiversity, with a view to a new institutional framework which, in contrast to the current arrangement, safeguards products originating from areas with high biological diversity;

v) Stimulating negotiations between the developed countries members of ECLAC and the countries of the region to progress towards the formulation of agreements or conventions that guarantee access to advanced training in biotechnology and pharmaceutical chemistry, and to data banks of decoded genetic sequences.

f) The economic value of water: a natural resource vital to development and social equity

Chapter 18 of Agenda 21 notes that the multisectoral nature of water resources development in the context of socio-economic development must be recognized, as well as the multi-interest utilization of water resources, ranging from drinking water to sewage systems, with various intermediate uses in industry, agriculture, urban development, hydropower generation, transport and recreation. Different ways of using water interact according to the development style and cultural traditions of each population group.

The development models historically adopted in Latin America and the Caribbean generated patterns of geographical siting of production, reflected mainly by the current situation in capital cities and metropolitan areas, where the most important human settlements are concentrated, as are the main sources of pollution at the regional level. In general, these urban centres tend to monopolize the means of production and domestic financial resources, while generating imbalances that promote external diseconomies and agglomeration. Their constant, rapid and disorderly growth has promoted water pollution and made it a serious threat to the health of their inhabitants and to the domestic economies themselves. In the region even more than in developed countries, the rational use of water requires more strenuous efforts to preserve and manage this resource, in large measure by managing and minimizing industrial and household wastes.

Urban sectors predominate in the region, representing over 60% of the total population, and consist mainly of poor and low-income groups that tend to agglomerate in the cities in the hope of finding better living conditions. Given the traditional absence of stable policies on basic sanitation, the region still shows a dismal record with regard to the final disposal of industrial and household wastes, which are generally dumped into freshwater streams or the sea with no treatment whatsoever. The importance of water as a resource in terms of both economic productivity and social well-being has not yet been duly evaluated, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, even though most economic and social activities depend entirely on the supply and quality of freshwater.[21]

As their populations and economic activities expand, a number of cities in the region are rapidly nearing the limit of the capacity of their water supply sources. Consequently, they face the danger of

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[21] Chapter 18, paragraph 47 of Agenda 21 notes that "Safe water supplies and environmental sanitation are vital for protecting the environment, improving health and alleviating poverty. Safe water is also crucial to many traditional and cultural activities. An estimated 80 per cent of all diseases and over one third of deaths in developing countries are caused by the consumption of contaminated water, and on average as much as one tenth of each person's productive time is sacrificed to water-related diseases".

being forced either to slow down economic activity in their territory or to pay very high prices for water supplied from alternative sources that are not economically feasible and that ultimately require them to seek subsidies[22] to meet the demand of production sectors and of low- and middle-income consumers.

Average demand for freshwater in the region's urban centres amounts to 30% of total national supply. However, the geographical distribution of water sources often tends to be incompatible with the location of demand. This problem is compounded by the reduction of supply through the contamination of sources by household and industrial wastes. Thus, the rational management of production and water consumption requires that plans and programmes in this sector be integrated with national economic and social development policies. In this regard, the implementation of Agenda 21 requires ECLAC to work closely with other specialized bodies of the United Nations system in seeking intersectoral solutions to water supply problems; inter alia, this task involves determining the supply and use of this resource, costing projects and maintenance, and standardizing measurements of pollution levels and evaluating them in economic terms, in order to make realistic estimates of the public expenditure required by this sector.

In this context, ECLAC must perceive water as an economic good that can have a powerful influence on both development and levels of social equity. Thus, the formulas currently used to evaluate the real cost of various types of water use (domestic, urban, industrial, etc.) should be improved through processes of managing demand linked primarily to price-setting mechanisms. There is also a need to spur the development of new economic instruments that take into account opportunity costs and environmental externalities.

Another basic aspect of this strategy is the treatment of household and industrial wastes, which often are the main cause of pollution and of shortages in freshwater reserves. The economic and social costs (mainly health-related) of omitting this dimension from development and urbanization tend, in general, to be neither evaluated nor considered in sustainable development accounting. This topic also should be linked to water conservation programmes that promote the development of technologies for efficient water use and the adoption of appropriate policies to minimize urban and industrial wastes (industrial technology).

These problems are causing a steady rise in the region's mortality and morbidity rates, which directly affect productivity and accelerate the growing deterioration of domestic public health systems.[23]

This situation has generated an urgent need to use analytical studies, conducted both in and outside the region, on the relations among geography, population and investments, both public (infrastructure) and private (production sector), to help expedite the introduction of territorial management processes compatible with the region's economic and political capacities. This effort must be accompanied by proposals on relocating production processes currently taking place in unsuitable areas and on policies designed to decentralize productive activities.

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[22] In 1989, the mayor of Mexico City claimed that 60% of the city's water meters were out of order (The Wall Street Journal, 10 January 1989).

[23] According to the World Bank, op. cit., p. 47, "It is the poor [...] who bear the brunt of risks from contaminated water. [...] For example, a family in the top fifth income group in Peru, the Dominican Republic, or Ghana is, respectively, three, six, and twelve times more likely to have a house connection than a family in the bottom fifth income group in those countries". See also figure 2.2, p. 47.

In the short and medium term, ECLAC, in coordination with UNEP and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and with their support, should encourage the countries of the region to carry out the following activities:

i) Studies on methods of intersectorally evaluating the real economic costs of the lack of integrated policies on water resource management;

ii) Research on development models aimed at reducing the costs of water collection, treatment and distribution services by promoting the use of appropriate and duly tested technologies, modernizing management systems and seeking alternative financing modalities that are compatible with the economic capacity of the countries of the region.

g) Transboundary movements of hazardous wastes

In section I of its resolution 44/226 of 22 December 1989, the General Assembly requested each regional commission, within existing resources, to contribute to the prevention of the illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes and of transboundary movements thereof. This request entails the establishment of a surveillance system and evaluations of the effects of this traffic on the environment and on human health. The General Assembly also asked the regional commissions to interact among themselves (interregional horizontal cooperation) and cooperate with UNEP in carrying out such activities.

To help fulfil this mandate, it is necessary, first, to determine sources of financing and decide how to recruit the human resources required for its implementation, whether by redistributing posts or by another means.[24] The main short- and medium-term activities that should be carried out in this area are the following:

i) In coordination with the aforementioned tasks concerning the establishment of national and regional information systems (see section c)), ECLAC should provide technical support for linking those systems to a regional surveillance network on traffic in toxic and hazardous wastes and products, whose implementation still depends on the decisions taken regarding its financing;

ii) To complement this effort, the various international agreements relating to the topic in question should be disseminated at the institutional level in all the countries of the region, including the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, whose implementation could be linked to the States parties to the Bamako Convention on the Ban and the Import of All Forms of Hazardous Wastes into Africa and on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, and to the Central American Convention on Environment and Development. At the same time, to the extent of its financial and technical capabilities, ECLAC should promote the convening of regional, subregional and interregional technical meetings to strengthen the region's negotiating position in this field and to seek areas of consensus that reconcile the diverse interests

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[24] The effective execution of these activities in Latin America and the Caribbean will depend to a large extent on the experience gained by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in its preliminary evaluation of illegal traffic in wastes, carried out jointly with UNEP.

of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.[25] The exchange of experiences and technical cooperation with the Economic Commission for Europe and the other regional commissions should also be considered;

iii) Promoting the study of the economic factors that determine the region's access to foreign technologies together with the development of indigenous technologies, to prevent and minimize toxic and hazardous industrial wastes. Also, mechanisms should be devised to alert the Commission on Sustainable Development and the UNDP "Capacity 21" programme to the need to strengthen the region's institutional competence with respect to the management of such wastes,[26] with a view to exploring the possibility that international technical cooperation may help enhance the safety of transporting dangerous products and wastes at the national and international levels.

4. Other topics related to the follow-up of UNCED in the context of the proposal on development with social equity and environmental sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean

Lastly, in accordance with the threefold objective of the proposed integrated development strategy, the countries of the region, in conducting activities to follow up UNCED, should systematically emphasize those which promote the development of human resources and the implementation of mechanisms to evaluate periodically, in economic terms, the results of applying the principles of sustainable development. However, care must be taken that this approach does not hamper or obstruct the region's steady progress towards greater levels of social equity.[27] In this specific area, ECLAC, with the collaboration of regional and international centres of academic excellence and with the support of UNDP, UNEP and UNU, will take charge of systematically carrying out the following activities:

i) Analysing the characteristics of the new phase of industrialization —which focuses on increasing added value— to determine their compatibility with requirements in the areas of social equity and environmental protection;

ii) Estimating the amount of financial resources needed to implement the process of sustainable development in the region, and identifying possible sources of financing, with special emphasis on the regionalization of additional international funds, through a mechanism that sets up a specific relationship between ECLAC and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); this alternative should be compared to the current arrangement, which grants exclusivity to the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF);

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[25] The first such regional meeting, to analyse the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, was organized by ECLAC in late 1993 with funding from the Swiss Government and support from UNEP and the secretariat of the Convention.

[26] Intraregional movements of toxic and hazardous wastes will also be considered in this context.

[27] ECLAC, Social Equity and Changing Production Patterns: An Integrated Approach (LC/G.1701/Rev.1-P), Santiago, Chile, 1992. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.II.G.5.

iii) With the support of other organizations of the United Nations system, and especially of the Latin American Economic System (SELA), promoting research and technical assistance activities related to the economic policy measures that should be applied to stimulate the simultaneous enhancement of competitiveness, social equity and environmental sustainability;

iv) Carrying out microeconomic studies on the introduction of the environmental variable into small- and medium-scale enterprises, to generate feedback for policies that affect this sector.